

CRW 2300: Intermediate Poetry Writing (Spring 2015)

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American Poetry

—Louis Simpson

Whatever it is, it must have
a stomach that can digest
rubber, coal, uranium, moons, poems.

Like the shark, it contains a shoe.
It must swim for miles through the desert
uttering cries that are almost human.
from *At the Equinox*

—Arthur Sze

Looping out into the world, we thread
and return. The lapping waves
cover an expanse of mussels clustered on
rocks;
and, give shape to what is unspoken,
forsythia buds and blooms in our arms.

Required Texts

- Perrine's Sound & Sense: An Introduction to Poetry 14th Ed. (Greg Johnson and Thomas R. Arp, ISBN 9781133307242)
- The Poet's Companion: A Guide to the Pleasures of Writing Poetry (Kim Addonizio and Dorianne Laux, ISBN 9780393316544)
- Above the River: The Complete Poems (James Wright, ISBN 9780374522827)

Course Description & Objectives

CRW 2300 is meant to serve two purposes—to provide a foundational base for Juniors and Seniors interested in poetry, and to act as a stepping stone into the department's upper levels for those who have already completed CRW 1301. The trajectory of the course will move from reading to writing. By learning to become better readers, we instinctively become better writers. Therefore, you will be expected to read voraciously, thoughtfully, and critically. We will read selected poems and essays that illustrate each week's area of interest, additional essays written by some of the Greats, and the complete work of a single poet (James Wright) in order to study one's individual relationship with writing and how it changes over time. Responding to these readings, we will write poems, shorter critical essays, a longer critical essay, a book review, a reflective self-assessment, and blog posts so that we can attack the subject from all angles in order to get the most out of what poetry can do for us.

We will begin the course by building a foundation through discussions and poem analyses, using vocabulary specific to poetry. Halfway through, we will transition into the workshop—this is where you'll have a chance to critique your peers' work and help them to become better writers. This is a supportive environment in which we will grow together. In addition, you will meet with me several times throughout the semester in individual conferences so that we can discuss your ongoing (and forthcoming) work. We will end the class with a portfolio of 10 poems that I hope you will be proud of.

The pacing will be rigorous, but I hope that by the end of the course, you will leave with a deeper understanding of what poetry means for us as humans, and what its purpose is in academia. We'll discover thinking heuristics that will enable us to become better writers in all disciplines. We'll develop sophisticated and confident voices. We'll refine (and redefine) our style, learn how to say things purposefully, get a good grasp on the canon, and track the movement within poems so that we can model it in our own work. With a strong grip on the foundation, we'll be able to move further beyond and see what the present demands of our writing.

We will be keeping track of the course through our class website, which is located at <http://crw2300-1644.wikispaces.com>. This will operate as our home base where you will find the syllabus, schedule, assignment sheets, prompts, links to your classmates' blogs, and a collection of readings.

Assignments & Grading

In addition to the ten poems you will be writing over the semester, the assignments detailed below meet the University's 6000-word requirement.

- **Poems**: Over the semester, you will write ten poems based on prompts that I provide each week. Poems will not be graded but will be evaluated on a check plus/check/check minus system. The first three poems will be turned in to me only, and then we will include workshop for the remaining seven. Formatting requirements and rules are found in the classroom policies section. Hold on to all of your original hard copies from me to put in your portfolio.
- **The Portfolio (700)**: You will be required to revise 6 poems for your final portfolio. A 700-word critical self-assessment will serve as an introduction to reflect on your progress, your revisions, and the way you've learned to approach the craft.
- **Blog Entries (6x250)**: You will be required to maintain a blog and write six 250-word entries. You will also be required to interact and comment on the entries of your assigned peer group in a thoughtful manner. This will encourage collaboration and thinking outside the classroom. These will be an opportunity to further converse on things we discussed in class that struck you in some way. These will be evaluated on the check system.
- **Reaction Papers (4x500)**: You will write four 500-word critical reaction papers over the semester. While you can discuss poetry more loosely in your blogs, these papers will instead be focused analytical papers, furthering something that you responded to in the readings. Keep the mushy-gushy feeling stuff out of these. Instead, make an argument. Decide on a thesis. Enlighten me (and yourselves) on some interesting poetic phenomenon. These will receive a letter grade.
- **The Big Paper (1500)**: You will write one longer paper, in the form of a close reading analysis on a poem or two. This will be a chance to employ the vocabulary and skills we'll learn together in class. The purpose of these papers is to make a careful argument on one particular aspect of the poem (or two, or three)

and see how that focuses your analysis and interpretation. Further instructions will be provided as we near the middle of the semester. This will receive a letter grade.

- **A book review (800)**: Finally, you are to write a book review on a short book of poems (perhaps one “chapter”) of a book that I okay. Further instructions will also be provided as we reach this assignment, and a letter grade will be given.

Grading Percentages

Assignment	Point Value
Poem Completion	10% points (10 x 1)
Weekly Response Papers	20% (4 x 5)
Essay	20%
Book Review	10%
Portfolio	20%
Blog Entries	10%
Presentation	5%
Class Preparation	5%
	Total: 1,000 points

Grading Rubric

Letter Grade System

“**A**” –A paper at this grade was done at an extraordinarily high-quality level. The work demonstrates an in-depth understanding of the concepts covered, and shows a thoughtful amount of creativity. This paper shows all the qualities listed below for a “B”, but goes beyond what was asked in terms of developing content and analysis. Papers at this level are usually free of all grammatical errors (papers with more than two errors cannot receive an “A”).

“**B**” –A paper at this grade has done what was asked of the assignment at a high-quality level. The work is complete and may need further revision, but works at an elementary level. The style is straightforward and the organization is logical. It may contain grammatical errors, but it is otherwise readable.

“**C**” –A paper at this grade has done what was asked of the assignment. The work may need significant revision, but is complete in content and has logical organization. This paper may contain more grammatical errors that render it unreadable at times.

“**D**” –A paper at this grade has completed the assignment at level of poor quality. The work needs significant revision. It is usually incomplete and the organization doesn’t make sense. Attention to style is nonexistent.

“**E**” –A paper that does not address the needs of the assignment or shows little effort will result in a failing grade.

Check System

√+ — “Check-plus quality work” is thoughtful, sophisticated work that goes beyond what

is asked of the assignment. (The point value is at 10 points.)

√ —“Check quality work” is work that does what the assignment asks, no more and no less. (7.5 points)

√- —“Check-minus quality work” is usually that of a hurried and sloppy quality, or a disregard for the prompt or assignment. (5 points)

Sometimes you might fall between a check and a check plus (or minus) and the points will be averaged.

Grading Scale

A 4.0 93-100%	C 2.0 73-76%
A- 3.67 90-92%	C- 1.67 70-72%
B+ 3.33 87-89%	D+ 1.33 67-69%
B 3.0 83-86%	D 1.0 63-66%
B- 2.67 80-82%	D- 0.67 60-62%
C+ 2.33 77-79%	E 0.00 0-59%

Class Policies

1. **Attendance-** Attendance is mandatory, though exemptions can be made for religious holidays, medical or family emergencies, and university-sponsored events such as athletics and band. Please provide documentation in advance. Because this class meets once a week, only two absences will be allowed. A third absence will result in the drop of a full letter grade. If you are expecting to be absent, be sure to email me your work sometime before class AND bring a hardcopy of your work to class the following week. (Or you may put it in my mailbox.)
2. **Late Material-** Late material will be accepted only once during the semester—that means you have one grace period to have a printer malfunction or a brain slip-up. I am happy to provide extensions, but please see me at least 4 days in advance (before the due date). I will go over your reason and decide if an extension is needed.
3. **Tardiness-** Please arrive on time—late arrivals disrupt the entire class, and it is frustrating for your peers to have to re-listen to my instructions again. Tardiness will be defined as being more than 5 minutes late. Two tardies= 1 absence.
4. **Preparation & Participation-** Come prepared. This means printing out all of the reading, bringing your textbooks, having made comments on your peers’ workshopped poems, AND coming armed with comments and reactions to the readings. Participation livens up the class (after all, class is during the afternoon/dinner slump), and I’d like to hear from everybody in the class.
5. **Disruptions-** No cell phones or computers, nor talking in class at inappropriate times. I will write you down without warning, and two instances of this = 1 tardy.

Also remember that people come from all types of backgrounds and have gone through all types of experiences, and we all feel uncomfortable being so vulnerable. It is our job to make this a welcoming environment. Any disruptions will have you dismissed from the class.

6. **Revisions-** I allow one revision from one of your reaction papers—this leaves room for trial and error. I want to see you break out of your comfort zone and push yourself.
7. **Formatting-** In order to receive credit through the check system, poems must be formatted in a particular way. In addition, be sure to print enough copies for your workshop group AND provide comments for your peers. Workshop guidelines will come later in the semester. Poems should:
 - be single-spaced, left-justified, and in Times New Roman, size 12
 - have a title
 - CONTAIN NO END-RHYMES
 - be written in complete sentences (grammatically correct)

Final Grade Appeals

Students may appeal a final grade by filling out a form available from Carla Blount, Program Assistant. Grade appeals may result in a lower, higher, or unchanged grade.

University Policies

Statement of Composition

This course can satisfy the UF General Education requirement for Composition. For more information, see: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/general-education-requirement.aspx>.

Statement of Writing requirement (WR)

This course can provide 6000 words toward fulfillment of the UF requirement for writing. For more information, see: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/writing-and-math-requirement.aspx>.

Student Disability Accommodations

The Disability Resource Center in the Dean of Students Office provides information and support regarding accommodations for students with disabilities. For more information, see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>.

Harassment

UF provides an educational and working environment that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment for its students, staff, and faculty. For more about UF policies regarding harassment, see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/sexual/>.

Academic Honesty

All students must abide by the Student Honor Code. For more information about academic honesty, including definitions of plagiarism and unauthorized collaboration, see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/honorcodes/honorcode.php>.

Evaluations

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course based on 10 criteria. These evaluations are conducted online at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results>.

UF Grading Policies

For questions about the University's grade policies, please see, <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

Schedule of Readings and Assignments

Date	Topic	Due
1/12	What is Poetry?	S&S 1, PC Writing & Knowing
1/19	NO CLASS	
1/26	How to Read a Poem	S&S 2, 3, 10; Poem 1, Blog 1
2/2	Images	S&S 4, PC Images; Poem 2, Reaction Paper 1
2/9	Figurative Language	S&S 5, 6, 9, PC Simile & Metaphor; Poem 3, Blog 2
2/16	Sounds	S&S 11, 13; Poem 4, Reaction Paper 2
2/23	Meter, Rhythm, the Blues	S&S 12, PC The Music of the Line; Poem 5, Blog 3
3/1	SPRING BREAK	Poem 6 due via email
3/9	Forms	S&S p.289-312; Blog 4
3/16	Translations	Poem 7, Reaction Paper 3
3/23	Stop Making Sense	PC Stop Making Sense; Big Paper Due , Poem 8
3/30	Myths & More	Poem 9, Reaction Paper 4
4/6	Visions & Revisions	PC The Energy of Revision; Poem 10, Blog 5
4/13	Conferences	Blog 6
4/20	LAST DAY	Portfolio Due, Book Review Due

S&S #: Sound & Sense Chapter #

PC: Poet's Companion